

# Inspection Connection

Seafood Inspection Program • U.S. Department of Commerce/NOAA

Vol. 2 No. 3

Winter 2001

## Services to Importers Often Overlooked

by Steven Wilson

Most of the industry is familiar with the Seafood Inspection Program's product and facility inspection services. Many are also aware of our services with regard to HACCP and training. Often overlooked, however, is how our services can be used to satisfy Federal requirements to import food into the United States.

One aspect of 21 CFR Part 123, the USFDA regulations on HACCP activities for seafood firms, lists those requirements for firms who import seafood products into the United States. This typically includes brokers and retail firms. Firms importing seafood products into the United States must either import from a country that has an active agreement with the USFDA, no agreements are currently operational, or have and implement written verification procedures to ensure the products entering the United States have complied with Federal regulations. The verification procedures must include product specifications and any one of the affirmative steps listed below:

- Obtaining HACCP and sanitation monitoring records
- A continuing lot-by-lot certificate from the foreign government or competent third party
- Regular inspection of the foreign processing facility
- Periodic testing of the imported product and maintaining the firm's HACCP plan and written guarantee, in English
- Other equivalent methods

The Seafood Inspection Program can assist importers in developing procedures, setting up a testing program, or conducting audits of overseas facilities. In fact, the Program has been providing these services for years, and the number of participants is steadily increasing.

Anyone interested in such services can contact either Kenneth Aadsen or Steven Wilson at 301-713-2355 for more information.

## Pay Your Inspection Bill Online - *Update*

by Rita Creitz

In the last issue of the Inspection Connection, we reported that our on-line payment option, supported by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, was planned to be available by the summer of 2001. While steady progress continues, the launch date for the option has slipped by several months.

The Inspection Program's on-line payment option will enhance, but not replace, our current method of mailing bills to customers. We will continue to issue inspection bills the "good old-fashioned" way.

If you're curious about the overall U.S. Treasury initiative, visit [www.pay.gov](http://www.pay.gov) and check it out!



## Wal-Mart Buys Inspected Product

by Monty Berg

Beginning September 30, 2001, all seafood products delivered to Wal-Mart warehouses will require USDC Lot Inspection. Wal-Mart has developed and received approval for 10 product specifications. Products not covered by the specifications will be inspected for a minimum of net weight, size (where applicable) and quality and condition.



Wal-Mart joins an increasing number of retailers wishing to verify that the products purchased and offered to customers reflect the desired quality.

## Inspection Certificates

by Rita Creitz

Within the next several months, USDC customers who receive inspection certificates will likely notice a difference in the certificate appearance. There is no cause for concern. The certificates provide the same information that can be used as prima facie evidence in a court of law, however, some of the certificates will have been created from a newly implemented electronic data system that will be linked to a centralized computer database. These certificates will have a randomly generated identification number and will be printed on specially designed watermark paper for added security against fraudulent misuse.

We are excited about this new technological advancement for our inspection program. As we get closer to full implementation, we will inform our customers individually.

## Question Corner

**Q** Does the USDC offer services for foreign processors?

**A** Yes. USDC technical experts can assist foreign processors in

- training in principles of auditing, HACCP, or sensory analysis;
- on-site implementation and verification of HACCP-based process controls
- third party verification activities

**Q** What is sensory evaluation?

**A** Sensory evaluation is the scientific measurement of product quality through objective physical, instrumental, or chemical means.



(Questions for the Inspection Connection may be mailed to Kimberly Young, USDC/NOAA/Seafood Inspection Program, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 10860, Silver Spring, MD 20910 or e-mailed via our web page at [seafood.nmfs.noaa.gov](http://seafood.nmfs.noaa.gov))



# Calendar

## HACCP Workshops for Industry

The Industry HACCP course is an intense three day course that covers all aspects of the HACCP concept as it relates to seafood harvesting, processing, transporting, distributing and retailing.

### October

16-18 Miami, FL  
23-25 Boston, MA

### November

6-8 Baltimore, MD  
15-17 Seattle, WA

### December

4-6 Los Angeles, CA  
10-12 Gloucester, MA

## Sensory Workshops

December 5-6, 2001 Gloucester, MA

## Upcoming Trade Shows

Look for our booth at the following show(s):

### Boston Seafood Show

March 12-14  
Boston, MA  
Booth #1312

# Trawling the Net

Looking for educational and resource material in Food Safety? Go to Iowa State University for your information needs.

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsafety/>

Looking for information on marine topics - from public school curriculum materials to the most advanced scientific research? Visit the National Sea Grant College Program website.

<http://www.nsgo.seagrant.org/>



Copies of this newsletter can be obtained at <http://seafood.nmfs.noaa.gov> or you can be added to the mailing list by mailing the following to: Documentation Approval and Supply Services Section, USDC/NOAA, 3207 Frederic Street, Suite B, PO Drawer 1207, Pascagoula, MS 39568-1207.

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